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Town of Aurora

## Memorandum

Mayor's Office

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**Re:** York Regional Council Highlights of May 23, 2024

**To:** Members of Council

**From:** Mayor Mrakas

**Date:** June 4, 2024

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### Recommendation

1. That the York Regional Council Highlights of May 23, 2024, be received for information.

# COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Thursday, May 30, 2024

York Regional Council – Thursday, May 23, 2024

Livestreaming of the public session of Council and Committee of the Whole meetings is available on the day of the meeting from 9 a.m. until the close of the meeting. Past sessions are available at [York.ca/councilandcommittee](https://york.ca/councilandcommittee)

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## **Commissioner of Community and Health Services Announces Retirement**

York Regional Council received notice that Katherine Chislett will retire from her position as Commissioner of Community and Health Services, effective Friday, June 28, 2024.

Commissioner Chislett has been an integral member of York Region's Senior Management Team for the past seven years, contributing significantly to the Region's success. Throughout her tenure, Commissioner Chislett's leadership has been characterized by empathy and compassion for staff, partners and residents while delivering exceptional results for our communities.

Some of Commissioner Chislett's many achievements include leading the Community and Health Services department through the COVID-19 pandemic response and immunization program, implementing York Region's first [Inclusion Charter](#) and first [Community and Safety and Well-Being Plan](#), the five-year update to the [Housing and Homelessness Plan](#) and the [Paramedic Master Plan](#). Additionally, she served as an integral part of York Region's [asylum seekers and refugees](#) response and has played a critical role in supporting the Region's most vulnerable residents.

Chairman Emmerson thanked Commissioner Chislett for her 37 years of outstanding public service and extended well wishes for a long, healthy and well-deserved retirement.

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## **York Region population grows to over 1.25 million residents, highest annual growth since 2018**

Regional Council received an update on The Regional Municipality of York's growth and development trends through the annual [Growth and Development Review](#). In 2023, York Region recorded the highest ever construction value, estimated at \$5.9 billion, continuing to accommodate a growing population of over 1.25 million residents.

Additional highlights from the [Growth and Development Review 2023](#) include:

- Total population growth of 18,737 people in 2023 to 1,258,200 residents, a 1.5% increase over 2022 and the highest percentage increase since 2018
- A 69% increase in residential building permits, totalling 12,022 units, with a record-high construction value of \$4.3 billion
- 9,945 housing completions, comprised of 59% apartments, 25% single detached and 16% townhomes, representing an 89% increase from 2022
- 3.6% decrease in average resale home prices, representing the first decrease since 2018

Despite strong residential construction activity, residential permits issued in 2023 were well below levels required to achieve provincial housing targets. Details on York Region's plan to address Housing Affordability and monitoring housing supply can be found at [york.ca/HousingAffordability](https://york.ca/HousingAffordability)

Find out more about how York Region manages and monitors growth at [york.ca/Planning](https://york.ca/Planning)

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### York Region investments earn high returns

Regional Council received an update on management of the [Region's General Fund and Sinking Fund investment portfolios](#). As of December 31, 2023, these investments had a combined maturity value of approximately \$6.85 billion, including:

- **\$166 million earned in General Fund returns:** earnings are used to augment reserves and reserve fund balances and consists of investments held for reserves and reserve funds, working capital and other corporate funds; maturity of these investments at year end totalled \$5.18 billion
- **\$35.6 million earned in Sinking Fund returns:** repay the principal amount of a debenture, an unsecured long-term business debt, upon its maturity; maturity of these investments at year end totalled \$1.67 billion

York Region's investment portfolio remains well positioned to respond to evolving needs and economic changes required to support the priorities of the [2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan](#) to build and maintain strong, caring and safe communities.

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### York Region makes progress in Year 1 of Strategic Plan

Regional Council received the [Year 1 \(2023\) Progress Report on the 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan](#), demonstrating progress in York Region's four priorities over this term of Council. In 2023, 34 of 48 performance measures (71%) were trending in the desired direction.

Highlights from the Year 1 Progress Report include:

- Achieved higher-than-forecasted transit ridership
- Increased collection of unpaid *Provincial Offences Act* fines
- Advanced planning and development of 563 new community housing units
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions through 14 electric buses in transit fleet and adding five fully electric vans to the corporate fleet

Results in the plan's four priority areas are measured and reported on annually to ensure progress is made on Council's priorities.

A copy of the progress report and other documents related to the Region's strategic planning are available at [york.ca/stratplan](https://york.ca/stratplan)

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### Long-term approach to managing assets continues to enhance quality of life in York Region

York Region's [2024 Corporate Asset Management Plan](#) outlines how York Region will continue to maintain its assets to provide services in a safe, reliable and cost-effective manner.

Regional assets have an estimated replacement value of \$25 billion, an increase of \$6.3 billion or 33% from 2021. Inflation trends, improvements to replacement cost evaluation and upcoming [critical wastewater infrastructure and retrofits](#) have significantly impacted estimated asset replacement values.

Regional assets include assets like buildings, facilities, roads, fleet vehicles and street trees. Over 90% of Regional infrastructure assets remain in very good to fair condition.

The projected budget to meet asset needs over the next 10 years (2023 to 2032) is \$17.8 billion. This includes capital costs for existing assets (\$3.8 billion), growth-related assets (\$4.6 billion) and operating costs for both (\$9.4 billion).

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### **\$8.4 billion slated for infrastructure projects to meet growing community needs**

Regional Council received presentations and reports on both Public Works [Transportation](#) and [Water and Wastewater](#) Capital Infrastructure updates, outlining how the Region is expanding and maintaining systems. The 2024 Public Works 10-Year Capital Plan includes \$4 billion in transportation projects and \$4.4 billion in water and wastewater projects for growth and asset management.

Over 270 transportation projects are planned for 2024, including widening roads in the most congested urban areas and near new development, bridging 400-series highways, improved intersections, new multi-use paths and streetscaping. Improvements will also be made to further increase and enhance traveller safety and experience as well as environmental sustainability.

The 2024 Water and Wastewater Capital Plan focuses on building the Regional water and wastewater network, sustaining service levels and managing system risk and resiliency. At the end of 2023, the capital program had 176 active projects.

Key water and wastewater projects for in the 2024 10-Year Capital Plan include requirements of [Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act](#), namely the north York Durham Sewage System expansion as part of the mandated [York Region Sewage Works Project](#). Other critical projects outlined are new or enhanced wastewater sewers, pumping stations and other facility infrastructure for the York Durham Primary Sewage System, servicing projects in the City of Vaughan and Township of King and water resource recovery facility updates in the Town of Georgina.

York Region's Transportation Master Plan and Water and Wastewater Master Plan guide infrastructure capital programs, ensuring Regional transportation and water and wastewater networks continue to meet the needs of our growing communities.

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### **2024 Update to Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan**

York Region's [2024 Corporate Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan](#) supports reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 through responsible use of technology, funding and asset replacement cycles. With a "conservation first" approach, greenhouse gas emissions will be mitigated by minimizing energy consumption.

The plan prioritizes electrifying the transit bus fleet and addressing emissions from buildings, wastewater, streetlights, traffic signals and transit shelters. Long-term plans integrate net-zero carbon upgrades with necessary repairs in buildings to ensure cost-effective solutions for building electrification.

York Region estimates 2050 direct corporate emissions can be reduced by 81% compared to its 2014 baseline and can avoid a cumulative release of 1.2 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 with these measures.

York Region is aligning climate action strategies with global institutions like the United Nations and Stockholm Resiliency Centre to ensure local efforts have the most impact. Learn more about the Region's Climate Action Plan at [york.ca/ClimateChange](https://york.ca/ClimateChange).

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### **York Region acquires 17 hectares in the Town of Georgina to expand the York Regional Forest**

Regional Council has [approved acquisition](#) of 17 hectares (42 acres) of land at 4302 Baseline Road in the Town of Georgina as part of York Region's [Greening Strategy](#). This addition will further expand the

York Regional Forest, a key component to York Region's commitment to protecting the natural environment and building sustainable communities.

The property was selected based on natural heritage significance, reforestation potential, cost and recreation opportunities and is a portion of a 40-hectare (90 acre) rural property neighbouring the existing Metro Road Tract.

This acquisition will complete Infrastructure Canada's [Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund](#) (DMAF) deliverable to secure 100 hectares of land. In 2019, York Region was awarded \$10 million in DMAF funding towards implementing a \$25 million natural infrastructure project over eight years.

The [York Regional Forest](#) includes 26 properties totalling over 2,600 hectares of publicly accessible greenspace. Since adopting the Greening Strategy in 2001, over 1,600 hectares of land have been preserved and protected through land securement by York Region and its partners. Learn more at [york.ca/greening](http://york.ca/greening).

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### **Sustaining community housing through York Region's Service Agreement Framework**

York Regional Council approved an [approach for Service Agreements](#) with housing providers operating housing projects designated under Part V11 of the *Housing Services Act*. Service Agreements ensure housing providers receive the right level of funding based on their operational and capital repair needs once their mortgages end.

York Region works with community housing providers in all nine cities and towns to provide affordable rental homes to residents, including market and subsidized units. Agreements provide an opportunity for York Region to continue working with housing providers on long-term stability of the community housing system, a critical priority as residents continue to face housing affordability challenges.

For more information, visit [york.ca/Housing](http://york.ca/Housing)

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### **York Region requests province provide a sustainable funding model for municipal operations of long-term care homes**

Regional Council is [requesting](#) the province establish a sustainable and equitable multi-year funding formula covering the total cost of operating municipal long-term care homes and include a comprehensive assessment of an individual's ability to contribute to the cost of their care.

The *Fixing Long-Term Care Act* requires every southern upper or single-tier municipality to establish and maintain a municipal long-term care home or contribute to maintenance and operation of a municipal home. Operating long-term care homes is increasingly more expensive as they are becoming more like hospitals, providing medical care, supervision and skilled nursing care of residents with complex care needs.

Funding to operate a long-term care home comes from two main sources:

- Provincial funding set by the province
- Resident co-payments (accommodation rates) set by the province

Operators, including York Region, are finding it increasingly challenging to fund total operating costs of their homes with only two main sources of revenue; municipalities subsidize total operating costs with property tax.

York Region operates two of the 29 long-term care homes and 232 of the estimated 4,041 long-term care beds in the Region.

For more information, visit [york.ca/LongTermCare](https://york.ca/LongTermCare)

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### **YRT Enforcement and Security supporting safety to travellers**

In 2023, York Region Transit (YRT) continued to [support public safety across the transit system](#) by working to ensure a safe, secure and comfortable experience for travellers.

### **York Region donating two decommissioned ambulances**

Regional Council approved [donating two decommissioned ambulances](#) to [Independent First Nations Alliance Regional Fire Rescue](#).

Independent First Nations Alliance Regional Fire Rescue operates Integrated Emergency Services, providing 24/7 response through an Emergency Operations Centre and Incident Management Teams in five communities in Northwestern Ontario.

These two decommissioned ambulances will enhance community safety and provide additional medical transport options for the five First Nation communities.

Decommissioned ambulances have reached their maximum lifespan of five years or 250,000 kilometres. Since 2014, Regional Council has approved donating 16 decommissioned ambulances to registered charities, not-for-profit and humanitarian aid organizations providing training, first aid service at local community events, mobile mental health education and paramedic services.

For more information visit [york.ca/ParamedicServices](https://york.ca/ParamedicServices)

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### **May Observances**

Regional Council recognized the following observances in May 2024:

- [Jewish Heritage Month](#)
  - [Asian Heritage Month](#)
  - [Dutch Heritage Month](#)
  - [Emergency Preparedness Week](#) – May 5 to 11, 2024
  - [Professional Clerks Week](#) – May 5 to 11, 2024
  - [National Nursing Week](#) – May 6 to 12, 2024
  - [Paramedic Services Week](#) – May 19 to 25, 2024
  - [National Public Works Week](#) – May 19 to 25, 2025
  - [National Accessibility Week](#) – May 26 to June 1, 2024
  - [National Physicians Day and First Responders Day](#) – Wednesday, May 1, 2024
  - [Red Dress Day](#) – Sunday, May 5, 2024
  - [Personal Support Workers Day](#) – May 19, 2024
  - [World Bee Day](#) – Monday, May 20, 2024
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## Next meeting of York Regional Council

York Regional Council will meet on Thursday, June 27, 2024, at 9 a.m. in the York Region Administrative Centre Council Chambers, located at 17250 Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket. The meeting will be streamed on [york.ca/live](https://york.ca/live)

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The Regional Municipality of York consists of nine local cities and towns and provides a variety of programs and services to over 1.25 million residents and 57,000 businesses with more than 629,000 employees. More information about York Region's key service areas is available at [york.ca/RegionalServices](https://york.ca/RegionalServices)

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